

Final announcement ECHO Awards 2024

Every year, ECHO, the Diversity Policy Expertise Centre, invites colleges and universities to nominate students for the ECHO Awards. VU Amsterdam also proudly nominates students to ECHO for these beautiful awards each year.

Who belongs to the target group of the ECHO Awards?

Students eligible for an ECHO Award are successful Dutch students with a non-western* or refugee background who stand out because of their entrepreneurial attitude, organisational ability, active community involvement and constructive approach in challenges related to exclusion.

* ECHO uses the following definition for non-Western: *Person whose migration background is one of the countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia (including Indonesia and Japan) or Turkey.*

For international students, they are only eligible if they:

- Identify as part of a marginalised community in their own context;
- Are planning to settle in the Netherlands;
- Have made a social contribution to Dutch society.

Award categories

The ECHO Awards can be divided into several categories. Each category has an award attached to it, namely the:

- WO/General Award
- Law & Tax Award
- STEM Award

VU may nominate 3 students for each award. So in total, VU may nominate a maximum of 9 students.

How do you participate?

As a limited number of students may be nominated for the ECHO Awards, at VU we work with a VU-wide internal selection round. Each faculty may nominate 2 candidates for this VU-wide internal selection round. If there are more candidates, the faculties themselves decide which 2 candidates to put forward for the VU-wide selection round.

Please note: nominations submitted outside of the faculties for the VU-wide selection procedure will not be considered by the jury.

It is therefore important for interested students to register with their faculty so that the faculty can take stock of how many students want to be nominated and whether any selection needs to take place within the faculty. How the selection is made is at the faculty's discretion. Ask your faculty about the internal procedure.

When nominated for the VU-wide internal selection round, faculties and students must provide the following documents:

- Fully completed nomination form (Note: completed by the faculty contact person nominating the student, e.g. a lecturer, programme director, faculty administrator or policy officer. **Students should not fill in this form themselves!**).
- A personal cover letter from the nominated student (see ECHO cover letter guidelines).
- A CV of the nominated student.

The nomination form and 2024 personal cover letter guidelines can be found and downloaded on ECHO's website: <https://echo-net.nl/en/echo-award/nominee-submission/>

What is the internal planning for the VU-wide selection process?

The deadline for faculties to submit nominations is at **23:59 on Tuesday 23 April**. During the first week of May, the jury will discuss the submitted nominations. If the jury deems it necessary, a round of short interviews will follow at the end of May, after which the results will be announced. In the first week of June, the Education Awards secretary will draft a nomination letter on behalf of VU and submit it to the Executive Board for approval. On 7 June at the latest, the selected students will be nominated to ECHO on behalf of the VU by the Education Awards secretary.

What happens after nomination to ECHO, and what can you win?

- Upon nomination by VU to ECHO, candidates automatically join the ECHO Ambassadors community, a network of socially engaged students and (young) professionals who have been nominated over the years. All nominated candidates are invited to participate in the ECHO Ambassadors Academy, a leadership programme that prepares candidates for their role as ECHO Ambassadors.
- Nominated candidates also go through a selection process at ECHO. ECHO shortlists finalists for each Award category. Finalists are expected to make a presentation to the ECHO jury. The finalists (and the public) will hear who the winners are at the award ceremony (expected in December 2024).
- **Winners will be rewarded with an all-expense paid Summercourse at UCLA in the United States in 2025.**

Criteria

- The student is innovative in thought and action: thinks outside the box, contributes to innovation in the social debate on diversity and inclusion;
- The student has organisational skills: can translate vision into practice, knows how to involve and enthuse people;
- The student has contributed to social impact: made a difference in society and demonstrably strengthened diversity and inclusion;
- The student is a critical friend: knows how to formulate constructive criticism on issues related to exclusion, thinks about constructive solutions.

Supplement to the above criteria for **the Law & Tax Award**:

- The student has a clear vision for diversity and inclusion in the broader social context, e.g. with regard to legislation, policy and implementation in law, including tax law and benefits.

Addition to the above criteria for **the STEM Award**:

- The student has a clear vision for innovation within STEM in a changing societal context.

Conditions

- The student is part of an underrepresented group, with a specific focus on Dutch students from non-western or refugee backgrounds;
- The student has excessive study performance (guideline: average of 7.5 or higher);
- The student has an excellent command of the English language;
- The student is available for the ECHO Ambassadors Academy taking place on **24 August 2024**;
- The student is available for an interview with the ECHO Award jury;
- The student is available to attend the 2024 ECHO Award ceremony (expected on **12 December 2024**, date subject to change).

Need more information or help?

Contact Kristel Struiksma, secretary Education Awards, at: k.struiksma@vu.nl.

For more general information about the ECHO Foundation and the ECHO Awards, see the website: <https://echo-net.nl/en/echoaward/>